

A lightning in the purple skies, with trees and a rural looking house



NESHAMAH RECHARGE

Counting the Omer
with Ritualwell



Counting of the Omer 2025 | 5785

Alternative text is available on photos for accessibility purposes.



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About **NESHAMAH RECHARGE**

The Counting of the Omer is a time for spiritual introspection and growth. During a time when many of us are feeling deflated and anxious about the state of the world, this ritual can help us to recharge our Neshamah, our soul.

Ritualwell is here for you! **Through the 7-week period of the Omer, we'll provide you with support, accountability, community and creative inspiration to do this spiritual work.**

And we are grateful for your support! **Counting the Omer: A Neshamah Recharge** is Ritualwell's annual campaign to sustain our work. Ritualwell's mission to create a welcoming space for individuals from diverse backgrounds who wish to embrace Jewish practice has become more vital than ever.

We know that you appreciate us being here for you during the Omer season and through the year. We rely on your support to continue our efforts. Ritualwell's free offerings are made possible by gifts from people like you. We invite you to make a donation of any amount to our campaign.

About COUNTING THE OMER

In Jewish tradition, we count the 49 days between Passover and Shavuot, symbolically connecting the Exodus from Egypt to the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai. This commandment is found in the Torah:

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאָכֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שִׁבְעַת שַׁבָּתוֹת תְּמִימֹת
תִּהְיֶינָה: עַד מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת הַשְּׁבִיעִת תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה
לַיהוָה:

*us'fartem lakhem mimokharat hashabbat miyom haveeakhm et omer hatenufa, sheva
shabatot temeemot tih'yena: ad mimokharat hashabbatt hash'vieet tisperoo
khameesheem yom v'hikravtem minkha khadashah l'adonai.*

And you shall count from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven full weeks shall they be; continuing fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall present a cereal offering of new grain to the ETERNAL.

Leviticus 23: 15-16



In ancient Israel, these 49 days marked the harvest season. The term "Omer" refers to a sheaf, and the Israelites would present a portion of their barley harvest as an offering at the Temple.

About

COUNTING THE OMER

Later, *Kabbalists* (Jewish mystics) assigned distinct mystical attributes to each of the seven weeks of the Omer. These seven qualities, known as *sephirot*, represent how the Kabbalists envisioned God's interaction with the world.

The seven *sephirot*/qualities are:

Hesed | Lovingkindness | חֶסֶד
Gevurah | Strength | גְּבוּרָה
Tiferet | Beauty | תִּפְאָרֶת
Netzach | Eternity | נֶצַח
Hod | Splendor | הוֹד
Yesod | Foundation | יְסוֹד
Malchut | Divine Presence | מַלְכוּת

We invite you to join our community in this counting tradition. Each week, we will share readings, prompts, and practices to reflect on that week's quality and how you can embody it in your life. Think of counting as taking a mindful moment, a time to recharge your *neshamah* (soul).

About COUNTING THE OMER

How to count:

Blessing from the Reconstructionist
siddur: Kol Haneshamah Shabbat
Vehagim

Traditionally, the Omer is counted each evening at sundown, beginning with the second night of Passover. It can be recited any time before dawn.

Before counting the Omer, say the blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר:

*Baruch atah adonay eloheynu melech ha'olam asher kideshanu
bemitzvotav vetzivanu al sefirat ha'omer.*

Blessed are you, ETERNAL, our God, the sovereign of all
worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot, and
commanded us concerning the counting of the Omer.



About

COUNTING THE OMER

How to count:

Blessing from the Reconstructionist siddur:
Kol Haneshamah Shabbat Vehagim

After saying the blessing, you recite the day of the Omer:

Today is the ____ Day of the Omer.

Then, after the first six days, you also include the number of weeks and days that one has counted.



Example:

Today is the thirteenth day of the Omer.

That is one week and six days of the Omer.

The words: "be kind to one another" written alongside a strand of wheat

♡♡♡
BE KIND
to one
ANOTHER

First week

HESED | LOVINGKINDNESS | תּוֹנָה

We begin counting the Omer with the sephira (quality) of Hesed. Often translated as lovingkindness, we embark on our Omer journey grounded in love and compassion.

This concept of love can encompass our personal relationships, the affection we share with friends and family, as well as the often challenging practice of self-love and compassion. You might also view Hesed as love flowing from a Divine Source, a love that you can both share and embrace.

In the service of supporting your **Neshamah Recharge**, we'll share five Jewish wisdom texts, including contemporary writers, that offer examples and inspiration connected to the sephirah of that week. After reading each resource, pause and reflect on how this reading helps you recharge your ability to experience Hesed.



Biblical example of Hesed:

To begin your focus on Hesed, we share the story of Rebecca at the well. Rebecca demonstrates Hesed when she generously responds to Eliezer's request for water. And even though she doesn't know him, she also offers to draw water for his thirsty camels.

וַיֵּרָץ הָעֶבֶד לִקְרָאתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגְּמִיאֵינִי נָא מִעַט־מַיִם מִכֶּדֶךָ: וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁתֵּה אֲדֹנָי וְתַמְהִיר
וְתֵרַד כֶּדֶה עַל־יָדָהּ וְתִשְׁקֶהוּ: וְתִכַּל לְהִשְׁקֹתוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר גַּם לְגַמְלֶיךָ אֶשְׂאֵב עַד אִם־כָּלוּ
לִשְׁתֹּת:

*vaiyarts haeved likratah, vaiyomer hag'mianee na me'at mayim mikadekh: vatomer
sheteh adonee vatemaher vated kadah al yadah vatashkehhu: vatkhal lhashkoto,
vatomer gam ligmalekha eshav ad im kiloo lishtot.*

The servant ran toward her and said, "Please, let me sip a little water from your jar." "Drink, my lord," she said, and she quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and let him drink. When she had let him drink his fill, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they finish drinking."

Genesis 24:17-19



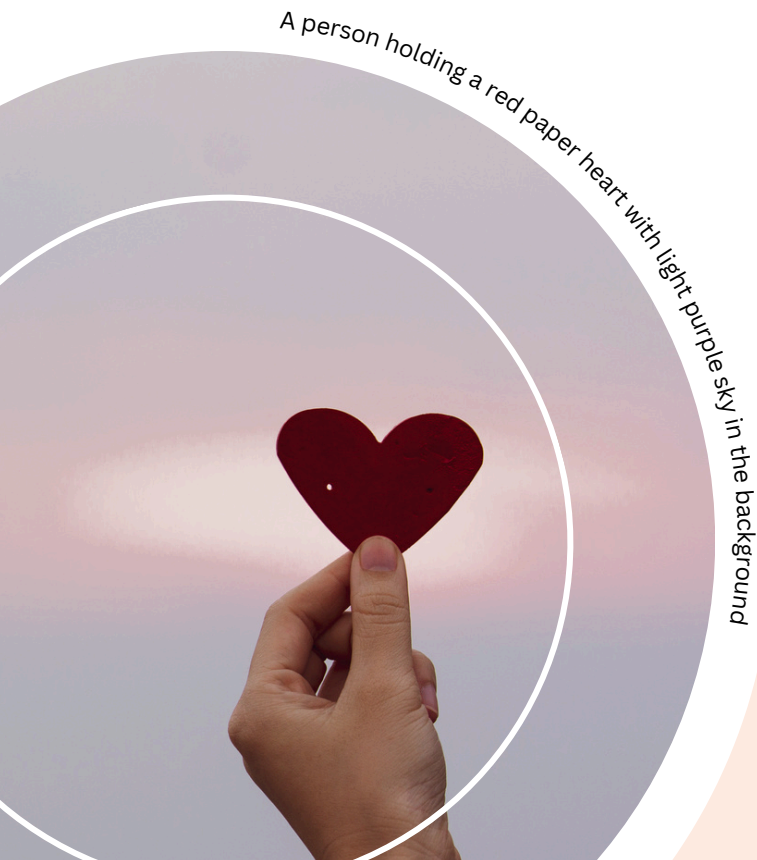
Modern example of Hesed:

The Ba'al Shem Tov, a mystic from the 18th century known as the founder of Hasidic Judaism, believed that because humans each hold a Divine spark, that loving people is a direct path to loving God.

He offers this short teaching about how human and Divine love are connected:

The Ba'al Shem Tov Teaches:

The three loves - the love of G-d, love of Torah, and the love of one's fellow - are indeed truly one.





Contemporary example of Hesed:

APRIL POEM

by Susan Windle

Washed in April
veiled in grey
the star magnolia opens.
In her fingers
I am lifted
to the tips of budding maples
and brushed
an early green
in the morning rain.

There you will find me still
wet, with daffodils.



Contemporary example of Hesed:

THE WORLD IS BUILT ON HESED

by Rabbi Renee Bauer

When did you receive hesed from others in the past year? When did you feel like someone else really understood your needs? Then ask yourself how you can bring hesed into the world in the coming year. Who is someone very different than yourself? How can you try to understand that person's point of view and act with kindness from that knowledge? What will you need to do to maintain compassion in that interaction?

Each act of compassion, tradition teaches, plants a seed for more compassion and leads to more hesed in the world. Let us together make compassion, grace and care grow in the coming year.

[Read More](#)



Contemporary example of Hesed:

OMER DAY 1: LOVINGKINDNESS WITHIN LOVINGKINDNESS

by Rabbi Malkah Binah Klein

How do we open the channel to Divine love? Given how quickly we can become constricted and closed off, the way to open the flow often seems mysterious and unreachable. Yet, it can also be quite simple. The first step is believing that it's possible to open to the flow. The second step is to open the channels from below and above.

[Read More](#)

HESED | LOVINGKINDNESS |

Prompts & Practices

Below are some ways that you can channel your creativity while reflecting on how the attributes of Hesed described in our texts and readings manifest in your own life. Set aside some time and find a quiet place, making it a comfortable environment for creative exploration (you might light a candle, bring a favorite drink, etc.)

Consider writing in response to one or more of these prompts:

- In Rebecca's encounter with Eliezar, she offers him assistance even though he is a stranger to her. Recall a time when you stepped in to help someone you didn't know and how that experience felt. Have you been on the receiving end of that kind of hesed?
- The Ba'al Shem Tov taught that humans each hold a Divine spark. Think of a person who has especially offered you kindness, caring or support. Write a thank you letter to them, describing the impact their kindness made.
- When our own soul is recharged, we're better able to offer hesed to others. Make a list of ways that you can offer more hesed (be kinder) and compassion to yourself.



HESED | LOVINGKINDNESS |

Prompts & Practices

In addition, here are some practices to consider for the week:

- Do the mitzvah of visiting the sick and take a meal, flowers or something to cheer someone who is ill.
- Make an effort to do an act of kindness for someone you struggle with.
- Offer hospitality to someone new to your community or whom you've meant to reach out to.

Green leaf plant growing from a crack in the ground



Second week

GEVURAH | STRENGTH | גְּבוּרָה

Our journey counting the Omer continues with the sefira (quality) of Gevurah. Often translated as strength or discipline, Gevurah invites us to explore the different dimensions of our resilience and the source of our strength.

This concept of strength is not about wielding power over others but focuses on what we think of as inner strength, the power that helps us get through hard times and stay hopeful. Gevurah could also be thought of as the kind of discipline it takes to stick to goals and practices that help your physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

*In the service of supporting your **Neshamah Recharge**, we'll share five Jewish wisdom texts, including contemporary writers, that offer examples and inspiration connected to the sephirah of that week. After reading each resource, pause and reflect on how this reading helps you recharge your ability to experience Gevurah.*



Biblical example of Gevurah:

To begin your focus on Gevurah, we share these words about finding strength from a Divine Source found in the first verse of Psalm 27. Throughout the Psalms, we find different kinds of imagery about finding strength, especially when facing hardship or adversity. In this verse, God is depicted as light, as a helper and also as a place of protection:

יְהוָה אֹרֶי וְיִשְׁעֵי מִמֶּנִּי אִירָא יְהוָה מְעוֹז־חַיִּי מִמֶּנִּי אֶפְחָד:

Adonai oree v'yishee mimi ira adonai maoz khayai mimi efakhed:

Adonai is my light and my help; whom should I fear?

Adonia is the stronghold of my life, whom should I dread?

Psalm 27: 1



Rabbinic example of Gevurah:

Pirke Avot, The Ethics of our Fathers, is a collection of rabbinic teachings about everyday human interactions and how to live an ethical and meaningful life.

In this teaching Ben Zoma describes strength as a kind of inner discipline, working towards equanimity and emotional regulation:

Ben Zoma said...Who is mighty?

He who subdues his [evil] inclination, as it is said:

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city”

Proverbs 16:32





Contemporary example of Gevurah:

BLESSING

by Elizabeth Caplun

The power to bless is the power
to choose.

(I hold it from my ancestors
whose power to choose
was cut short by the powerful.)

The power to bless is the freedom
to see
the Canada geese strutting in the grass
to feel
the warmth of the sun
to hear
the birds singing high in the canopy

knowing
it could all be gone in a moment
if I, if we, do not act to make life,

our life,
a blessing
Now.

[Read More](#)



Contemporary example of Gevurah:

OMER DAY 13: THE GROUNDING OF BOUNDARIES

by Jake Best Adler

Boundaries provide an important foundation. We talk glowingly about people who color outside the lines, but we rarely discuss the important of those lines. Ornette Coleman's free jazz, which can feel cacophonous, came from a place of deep knowledge and years of training. In order to successfully break the rules, we need to know very deeply the rules that we are breaking. The art can't have the same impact without the knowledge that it is transgressive and revolutionary. We need to be able to see the supporting structure so that we can appreciate the freedom to riff.

[Read More](#)



Contemporary example of Gevurah:

HELP ME

by Betty Shapiro

With a piercing cry, I reach out to the Shekhinah,

Help me! Help me! Help me:

Reawaken me to my loving family and supportive friends.

Encourage me to develop my own natural healing abilities.

Empower me to educate myself to learn about available resources.

Inspire me to respond creatively and meaningfully.

Guide me to understand that accepting help is not a sign of weakness but of strength.

Embolden me to put forth my best efforts.

Give me the strength to discover new ways to be.

Please gift me with hope.

Amen

Gevurah | Strength | גְּבוּרָה

Prompts & Practices

Below are some ways that you can channel your creativity while reflecting on how the attributes of Gevurah described in our texts and readings manifest in your own life. Set aside some time and find a quiet place, making it a comfortable environment for creative exploration (you might light a candle, bring a favorite drink, etc.)

Consider writing in response to one or more of these prompts:

- In Psalm 27, the poet uses imagery to describe strength from a Divine source. Try writing your own metaphor for that kind of strength, using the name for God or a power greater than ourselves that resonates with you (such as Adonai, Shekhinah, Hashem, the Mystery, the Universe).
Adonai is my _____.
- Ben Zoma imagines strength as an inner force or discipline. Craft your own answer to his question, “Who is mighty?” Describe a person who embodies the quality of Gevurah. How do they show strength, determination or discipline? In what ways do they use this strength for greater good?



A child dressed as a superhero lifting their arms up to show their muscles

Gevurah | Strength | גבורה

Prompts & Practices

In addition, here are some practices to consider for the week:

- Meditation is a helpful discipline to develop emotional regulation. Ritualwell features many Jewish guided meditations to try this week.
- Journaling is a great tool for developing inner strength. Take a few minutes to reflect in a journal after counting the Omer each night.
- Check in with a friend who is also committed to Counting the Omer and support each other's discipline with regular check-ins by phone or text.



Third week

TIFERET | BEAUTY | תְּפִאֶרֶת

Our journey in counting the Omer continues with the sefira (quality) of Tiferet. Tiferet embodies beauty, harmony, and balance. It invites us to appreciate the elegance and equilibrium found in the natural world, as well as to acknowledge the beauty and harmony present in our relationships—with others, within ourselves, and with the Divine Life Force that transcends our individual existence.

We can perceive Tiferet as a representation of aesthetic beauty, acknowledging it in art, nature, and the idea of hiddur mitzvah (the practice of enhancing a mitzvah's beauty, like elegantly decorating a sukkah). We can also look at the inner beauty shining within people—their qualities of kindness, compassion and generosity.

In the service of supporting your **Neshamah Recharge**, we'll share five Jewish wisdom texts, including contemporary writers, that offer examples and inspiration connected to the sephirah of that week. After reading each resource, pause and reflect on how this reading helps you recharge your ability to experience Tiferet.



Biblical example of Tiferet:

To begin your focus on Tiferet, we share these beautiful lines from 'The Song of Songs,' the exquisite love poem found in the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible). While often viewed as an allegory representing the love between God and the Jewish people, it can also be appreciated simply as a love poem.

In this passage, the two speakers—a young man and woman—articulate their feelings of affection and attraction:



Continue on the next page

hinakh yafah rayahtee, hinakh yafah
ayinaikh yoneem
hinkha yafeh dodee af naeem
af arsenu ra'anana
korot bateinu arazeem
(rakheeteinu) [rahiteinu] broteem.

הַנָּךְ יָפָה רַעֲיָתִי הַנָּךְ יָפָה
עֵינֶיךָ יוֹנִים:
הַנָּךְ יָפָה דּוֹדִי אֶף נָעִים
אֶף־עֶרְשֵׁנוּ רַעֲנָנָה:
קִרְוֹת בְּתֵינֹן אֲרָזִים
(רַחֲיִטְנוּ) [רַהֲיִטְנוּ] בְּרוֹתֵימ:

Ah, you are fair, my darling,
Ah, you are fair,
With your dove-like eyes!
And you, my beloved, are handsome,
Beautiful indeed!
Our couch is in a bower;
Cedars are the beams of our house,
Cypresses the rafters.

–Song of Songs, 1:15-17



Rabbinic example of Tiferet:

Exploration of the Song of Songs continues in this rabbinic midrash (commentary that explains Jewish texts). Here, the rabbis describe the beauty that can be found in Jewish practice and observance—that doing mitzvot is a beautiful way to be in the world:

You are beautiful, my love, you are beautiful, through mitzvot . . . beautiful through mitzvot, beautiful through deeds of loving kindness, . . . through prayer, through reciting the “Shema,” through the mezuzah, through phylacteries, through Sukkah and lulav and etrog...

Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah 1.15



Contemporary example of Tiferet:

DAY 16: GEVURAH OF TIFERET by Rabbi Maurice Harris

Beauty manifests as radiant energy bounded by structures. The energy pulses, the borders define. The formless energy follows the secret path of an encoded design within. The shape may change.

[**Read More**](#)

Contemporary example of Tiferet:



NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES

by Jaden Diamond

Adonai, how beautiful is Your name.

Adonai, how holy are Your works.

Adonai, how gorgeous is the universe so filled
with wonder and beauty.

Adonai, God of Israel, holy are You.

[Read More](#)

A closeup on a strand of a plant glowing in the sunshine





Contemporary example of Tiferet:
CHANGES
by Terry Boyle

There's a touch of warmth to the evening air.
There's just enough warmness to stir to life
that budding promise and expectation to believe
that this vigil of dark lonely nights
will gently pass into a brighter awakening.

Soon, the glory of the divine will appear
so naturally, and so inconspicuously,
in a wondrous glorious floral homage,
gaily displaying an array of pleasing colours
enough to satisfy even this pilgrim's heart.

[Read More](#)

Tiferet | Beauty | תִּפְאֶרֶת

Prompts & Practices

Below are some ways that you can channel your creativity while reflecting on how the attributes of Tiferet described in our texts and readings manifest in your own life. Set aside some time and find a quiet place, making it a comfortable environment for creative exploration (you might light a candle, bring a favorite drink, etc.)

Consider writing in response to one or more of these prompts:

- The Song of Song explores affection, beauty and love. In honor of Tiferet, write a love letter (romantic or platonic) to someone whom you care about deeply. Describe their qualities that you most appreciate and express your gratitude for their presence in your life.
- In Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah, the rabbis describe how doing mitzvot can be a thing of beauty. Write about an experience you've had doing a mitzvah (such as lighting Shabbat or Hanukkah candles, putting up a mezuzah, sitting in a sukkah etc.) that felt like a beautiful experience.
- Look around the room you're sitting in and find one thing that strikes you as beautiful. Look at it with care and describe its attributes in detail: its size and shape, colors and design. What makes you consider it to be a thing of beauty?



Tiferet | Beauty | תְּפִאֶרֶת

Prompts & Practices

In addition, here are some practices to consider for the week:

- Recognizing that doing mitzvot can be a way to find beauty, try a new mitzvah that you don't usually do this week. You might try saying a blessing before you eat, inviting someone to your home for a meal or saying the Shehecheyanu blessing at a new, special moment.
- Taking nature photos is a mindful way to appreciate the beauty of the world around us. Take a walk and look for beautiful things to capture.
- In honor of Tiferet, visit a place full of beautiful things, like an art museum, garden or place full of whatever feels beautiful to you.



Next week's sephirah/quality:

NETZACH | ETERNITY | נְצַח





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